REPORT

ON

THE ADMINISTRATION

OF

BENGAL

1871-72.

PART I.—THE GENERAL REPORT.

PART II.—APPENDIX: DEPARTMENTAL CHAPTERS AND STATISTICAL RETURNS.

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PART I.

THE GENERAL REPORT.

BENGAL ADMINISTRATION REPORT

For the year 1871-72.

Plan of the report.

LAST year's report explained the constitution of the Bengal Government, the character and limits of the countries which it administers, the frontier tribes and frontier questions, the provincial and district divisions of the territory, and the administration of the year ending with March 1871. The present report will be principally confined to the events, measures, and administrative history of the subsequent period, with just so much retrospect of the past as is necessary to make the present understood.

In so great an administration, comprising so many and so weighty departments, it is impossible to send in a complete report at a very early date, if it is to comprise the various facts, figures, and observations supplied by the heads of departments and the Commissioners of the principal local divisions. If the report is hurried, much that is interesting and important must be omitted; if it is kept back for all the information which is duly digested in each department at the end of each year, it cannot be commenced till a good many months after the close of the year. On the whole, the best method will probably be that adopted on the present occasion, viz. to wait for the detailed figures and reports of the past year, but to include in the general report brief notice of anything remarkable or important that has occurred in the intervening period. In this view, six months may be allowed to collect the reports and figures after the close of the official year on the 31st March, and the general report may be completed in October. The present report may then be considered to some extent and for some purposes to continue the administrative history of Bengal down to October 1872.

It should be remembered, however, that while the General and Revenue Departments make most of their returns to the end of the official year, those connected with the Judicial Department, the Police, Jails, and returns of Criminal and Civil Justice, and the principal Medical Reports, are made up for the calendar year, and extend no further than the end of 1871.

The plan of this report is to place first a general report of the whole administration, and then to append separate chapters giving the details of the principal departments which submit separate reports to the Government.

Character of the season 1871.

The past year, if not one of complete peace, was one of abundance and general prosperity. The rains of 1871 were extraordinarily abundant. In this respect indeed the season was most abnormal. There was scarcely at all the usual dry and hot season of the early summer, much rain in the early months having almost obliterated the distinction between the hot and rainy seasons. Throughout the usual rainy season, the rains were, in by far the greater part of the country, plentiful beyond precedent; yet in a portion of north-east Bengal, together with lower Assam and the adjacent hills, the fall was below the average.

Compared with 1872.

By way of contrast it may be here mentioned that the rains of 1872 have been equally abnormal, but the departure from rule has been in the opposite direction. The season has been dry beyond all experience. Scarcely a drop of the rain which generally comes with occasional storms broke the dryness of the hot weather, and throughout the usual rainy season there has been hardly a single general and far extended heavy fall. The partial and fitful rains, falling in capricious showers here and there in the most irregular way, have in most districts up to the middle of October scarcely amounted to more than half the usual fall. Yet in at least one important district of Eastern Bengal the rainfall of 1872 has been extraordinarily large, and it is understood that in the North-Western Provinces and Punjab there has been a most unusually large rainfall. The years 1871-72 have thus been seasons of extreme climatic disturbance.

The abundant rains of 1871 ceased somewhat early, and in the cold season of 1871-72 there was less than the usual moisture.

Effect on crops in 1871.

Although the main crops of 1871 were abundant, and the year, as has been said, was generally prosperous, all crops did not benefit by the prolonged and excessive rainfall. The effect on the different classes of crops of excessive rain in one year, and of very deficient rain in the next, has hardly been what might at first sight have been expected. It might be supposed that the crops on the high and dry lands would benefit by abundant rain, and suffer from deficiency of rain. The fact has been just the other way. Great complaints were made that the excessive rain of 1871 had ruined the higher crops of the hilly Sonthal Pergunnahs, and unfavorably affected other crops grown in dry situations in the rainy season; while the early cessation and small sequence of the rains rendered the cold weather crops not very productive. Altogether the season 1871-72 was comparatively unfavorable for what are in some parts of India called dry crops; but as rice is the main staple of these provinces, the general result of the season was certainly good. In the summer of 1872, on the other hand, the extraordinarily scanty rains, happily distributed, have given an unprecedented early crop in the higher lands of Behar, and in all the hilly countries of Chota Nagpore and the Sonthal Pergunnahs, and there has not been much complaint of the early rice crops of Bengal. Great apprehensions have been felt for the main or late rice crop over great part of the country, but rain now falling (in the latter part of October), gives great hopes of much improvement in this prospect, and of a favorable commencement for the cold weather crops.

In 1872.

Indigo.

Tea.

Of the principal staples of European industry and commerce, the indigo of 1871, though good in Behar, was much injured by the heavy rainfall in Bengal Proper; while the tea crop was abundant beyond any former year, and the tea interests were most prosperous. In 1872, on the other hand, with so scanty rain the indigo crop in Bengal has been good beyond all precedent, and it is believed that the result is almost equally favorable in Behar. But the tea plantations have, it is understood, not been so productive as in the previous year.

Oil-seeds.

The peculiarity of the season 1871-72 seems to have much affected the trade in oil-seeds, which are mostly produced in

the cold weather or on dry soils, and which seem to have greatly failed.

Jute.

The jute crop was an extraordinary one: that great mercantile staple of Bengal never was so abundant. It may be noted, however, that much of the jute comes from the part of the country where the rainfall of the season was rather less than usual, and in the present year of scanty rain the reports of the jute appear again to be very favorable.

Opium.

The opium crops of both 1871 and 1872 have been unfortunate. In each year crops of great promise were much shortened at the last moment by the weather of the early spring, the cloudy and moist weather having caused a blight in 1871, while the dry winds caused a short crop in 1872.

Incompleteness of our meteorological knowledge.

Evidently the two seasons 1871-72, abnormal in all respects, give much scope for inquiry both as respects meteorological science and the effect of peculiar climatic conditions on agriculture, health, and the condition of the people and the country. We still know little of the course of the monsoons, of the circumstances under which the summer rainfall is thrown sometimes on the east, sometimes on the west of the Bay of Bengal, and under which it is sometimes abundant in Bengal and scanty in the North-Western Provinces, and sometimes, as in 1872, almost deserts Bengal and falls in great quantities in northern India. We still do not know whether the rainfall of northern India is most connected with the rain-bearing currents which, coming to Bengal from the south, are deflected to the west by the Himalayan range, or with those which come up from the western coast. Still less do we know whether the south-easterly currents which not unfrequently prevail in Bengal in the latter part of the rainy season, and the considerable after fall which is not unusual towards the end of October, have any connection with the currents which cause the north-east monsoon falling on the south-western coasts of the Bay of Bengal. It is most desirable that these subjects should be studied, since they may not improbably enable us to understand better the course of the seasons, and in some degree to forecast them.

Lieutenant-Governor's tours.

The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal is much tied to Calcutta in the cold season (in which tours are chiefly made in

other parts of India) owing to the presence at that time of the Government and Legislature of India and the mass of business which then comes forward. The sittings of the Bengal Council have also been unusually prolonged both in 1871 and in 1872, and the Lieutenant-Governor has in each year not been free till August. But in the autumn of 1871 he made a very extensive tour in Eastern Bengal and Assam, and afterwards visited some of the Behar districts; and since the closing of the Council in 1872 he has visited many districts of Central and West Bengal (including those suffering from fever) and some of those in Behar, and has seen much of the Chota Nagpore Commissionership.

Inundations and their consequent damages.

The excessive rainfall of 1871 caused great floods in Central Bengal, in some of the districts most under the domain of the great rivers; but the only great flood of very widely disastrous consequences was that which affected the districts of Moorshedabad, Nuddea, and Jessore, but more especially Nuddea. The embankments on the left bank of the Bhagiruttee, in the Moorshedabad district, gave way, and the waters from that and other directions swept into the Nuddea district, carried away portions of the Eastern Bengal Railway, and poured into parts of Jessore.

Even in this case, however, the result almost justifies the converse of the English proverb and a statement that rain never breeds dearth in India. The losses in Nuddea and parts of other districts were certainly excessive. The Lieutenant-Governor himself saw a state of things from which he could hardly have believed that the population could have emerged, still less that they could have emerged self-supporting. Yet they showed wonderful self-reliance and self-help, and eventually made very little demand for the assistance which the Government was prepared to give in case of need. There was little loss of life, but a terrible loss and mortality among cattle.

The means of the flooded districts have, no doubt, been decreased to such a degree that it will take them some time to recover; but perhaps the Indian proverb "The corner of a field saved from flood is worth ten fields saved from drought," explains in some degree their recovery. Whatever crop does not perish, produces abundantly, and the after effects of flood are very good. Certainly the districts so unfortunate in 1871 seem now to be getting on pretty well without great complaint or appeal for public aid.

The public health.

The excessive moisture of 1871 does not seem to have been on the whole unfavorable to health; on the contrary throughout the greater part of the country the season was remarkably healthy—in Calcutta especially so. Cholera was comparatively very little prevalent. We have not yet in Bengal any vital statistics worthy of the name; but the jail and other statistics seem to show that low and marshy as most of Bengal is, there is a singularly small proportion of fatal fever, all things considered. Dysentery is the great scourge of the country,—a disease probably largely due to impure water. The water is too near the surface for good wells, and the people chiefly depend on tanks—generally very stagnant, filthy, and ill-regulated. In some parts of the country, where the tidal waters become brackish in the dry season, there is much difficulty in getting any decent fresh water. Out of 3,881 deaths in the principal hospitals and dispensaries, the number of deaths from some of the principal diseases was as follows:—

Dysentery and diarrhœa	1,309
Fever	346
Cholera	173
Phthisis	228

There was unusually little small-pox.

The Burdwan fever.

Though, as has been said, fever is not so prevalent as might be expected, the mysterious fever marching over particular localities, which has in many parts of India defied all attempts to trace its origin and causes, and which has for some years scourged parts of Western Bengal, broke out in the year 1871 with renewed and extreme virulence in the Burdwan district, and has brought under its fell dominion almost the whole of that district and parts of those adjoining—especially a great part of Hooghly—causing great mortality and much reducing the population and lowering the health of some considerable tracts.

The Government has done all that it was possible to do. Every medical man who could in any way be made available has been employed, medicines have been supplied without stint, and dispensaries have been dotted all over the fever-stricken tracts. For the supply of medical comforts—food, clothing, and other wants—a public subscription has been opened. The Lieutenant-Governor was quite satisfied by personal inquiry that the people acknowledge and appreciate

the efforts which have been made to assist them. The Maharajah of Burdwan, who had formerly made a magnificent gift of Rs. 25,000 for the relief of the suffering districts, has made a further donation of Rs. 25,000, and other subscriptions came in, making a total sum of Rs. 64,900 available from private sources.

From the beginning of the outbreak Government has complied to the utmost of its power with every requisition of the local authorities without any regard to cost, the expenditure for quinine in Burdwan alone being over Rs. 5,000 a month. After the close of the year the Government of India contributed one lakh of rupees for the purposes of relief. The details of the measures adopted will be found in the appended chapter, headed "Vital Statistics."

The fever lasted with great severity into the early part of 1872, and very many cases, prostrated by previous attacks, continue to supply abundant work for our establishments and dispensaries; but happily, so far as the present season has gone, there seems reason to hope that the virulence of the attack is abating.

The causes of the fever.

The theory that much injury has been done to the drainage of the country by our railways and embanked roads, is one which the educated natives have much espoused, but the inquiries on the subject seem to negative this belief. It is possible, however, that the fever may be aggravated, if not caused, by the gradual silting up of the country, as the Gangetic streams have moved farther east since the beginning of the present century. The most plausible theory to account for the depopulation of the present Soonderbuns, as compared to traces of former population, is that when the main streams of the Ganges flowed to the sea that way, the waters were fresh and the country tolerably wholesome, as are now the sea-board districts farther east; whereas now the fresh water having failed, salt and brackish water has taken possession of the numerous Soonderbun channels. Brackish water can hardly find its way into the Burdwan fever tracts, but much of the district is to a considerable degree water-logged. The partial inquiries on this subject having led to no tangible result, a systematic survey of the levels and drainage of this part of the country has been undertaken by the officers of the Irrigation Department, and will at least put us in possession of the main physical facts. This survey has already been to a great

extent carried out, and is only delayed by the sickness of many of the officers employed.

The observations of the disease seem, however, to show that it creeps over the country, taking hold in many cases of high lands and low lands alike, and after a period relaxing its hold in a way which seems to indicate, if not contagion or infection, at least some kind of local progression which we do not understand. And however we may mitigate the disease by drainage or other engineering expedients, there is still much for medical science to discover before we can understand it so as to cope with it effectually. The subject has, and will continue to have, the unremitting attention of the Government.

The Lushai expedition.

Our own territories have not been the scene of war or open violence during the year, but the eastern districts have been the bases of a considerable expedition undertaken to punish the serious raids committed by the frontier tribes called Lushais, located in the country between the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Cachar. This tract is sometimes depicted in the maps as British territory, because it is politically on the British side of the line between British India and Independent Burmah. We have, however, not only exercised no jurisdiction over it, but have had no proper knowledge of it, never having succeeded in exploring it. In last year's report the raids and massacres committed by these tribes on our subjects and tea planters were described, and some account of the Lushais was given. These Lushais are a sub-division of the large group of tribes on that frontier known as Kookies, and after dominating over several other tribes they had become so powerful and aggressive that after much consultations between the Governments of India and Bengal and the military authorities, it was determined to organise an expedition on a scale sufficient to deal effectually with them, and if possible to secure a lasting peace. Accordingly two strong military columns under Brigadier-Generals Bourchier and Brownlow were organised and despatched, from the Cachar and Chittagong sides respectively, and took the field in November 1871, as soon as the rains had sufficiently subsided.

The fullest discretion and authority were committed to the commanding officers, and the duty of this Government was for the most part confined to deputing a political officer to accompany each column in order to conduct negoti-

ations and assist the commanding officer with his advice, and to organising the coolie corps subsidiary to the military force, and making the necessary arrangements for boats, provisions, &c. A considerable force of the frontier police was also employed. These subsidiary arrangements necessarily entailed considerable demands on some of the Bengal districts and imposed arduous duties on some Bengal officers. Cachar and the Chittagong Hill Tracts were all but the scene of war, and the resources of Sylhet and Chittagong were under constant requisition, while the Dacca districts were largely drawn on for boats, and other districts for coolies, especially Darjeeling, where Colonel Haughton enlisted and despatched a large Nepalese coolie corps. The natives of Bengal are especially unwilling to take service of this kind, and a large number of coolies was brought down from the Punjab and North-Western Provinces. The Commissariat officers, and especially the Deputy Commissary General, Colonel Dickens, C.B., have much assisted the Government in this respect.

Successful results.

The expedition was extremely successful. Particulars regarding it will be given in a subsequent part of the report, in the chapter headed "Political."

It is sufficient here to notice that the northern column penetrated 193 miles from Cachar into the very heart of the Eastern Lushai country in spite of the active opposition in some places of the intermediate tribes. The tribes of Vonpilal, Poiboy, and Vonolel, the most powerful chiefs, were reduced to submission, and the chief village of the last-named chief, who had been undoubtedly concerned in the Monier Khal raids, was destroyed. The arms taken from the sepoys who were killed last year were surrendered, the fine imposed on the tribe was paid, hostages accompanied the force on its return, and guarantees were given of free passage through the country in future for Government agents. Nor were the operations of the Chittagong column under General Brownlow less successful. The fastnesses of the Syloo tribe were one after another captured and destroyed; and such was the effect of these early successes upon the neighbouring tribe of Northern Howlongs, that when a small column proceeded on its way to their villages, the chiefs came in and made unreserved submission, agreeing to surrender all their captives, abstain from raids, and give free passage to our messengers. Their submission was followed by that of the Syloos, and that again

by overtures from the Southern Howlongs, a strong and remote branch of the tribe. The terms were in each case the same, the main stipulations being the surrender of captives and abstinence from raids.

Survey work done.

Not the least important part of the season's operations was the work of the survey parties attached to each column. The northern party, whose route led them further from their base than was the case on the Chittagong side, succeeded in surveying topographically 4,800 square miles of new country. The southern party mapped in the same way 1,700 square miles. Unfortunately the two columns, though at one time within 40 miles of each other, never met, and owing to the difficult nature of the country did not even see each other's signals.

Services of officers.

It need only be added that while warmly acknowledging the admirable manner in which the military officers commanding the expedition conducted it, and heartily thanking them for the successful result, the Lieutenant-Governor thinks it right to mention, as more particularly belonging to his own department, the special services rendered by Mr. J. W. Edgar, C.S., the Civil Officer with the Cachar column, whose services in previous negotiations with, and exploration of, these tribes, accompanied with much personal hardships and risk, are well known to the Government of India, and who, on the present occasion, conducted all his duties in an admirable manner. To Captain Lewin, the active and experienced Civil Officer with the other column, the Lieutenant-Governor's acknowledgments are also due, as well as to Mr. Hankey, the Commissioner of Chittagong, and to the officers of the Sylhet and Cachar districts.

The officers in charge of the coolie corps conducted their duties admirably, and Captain Hidayut Alli, in charge of the Nepalese coolie corps, was specially useful and devoted to the work given him by this Government.

Health of the expedition.

The only very unfortunate occurrence in connection with the expedition was a lamentable outbreak of cholera among the Nepalese coolies while proceeding by water to the scene of the expedition. The survivors did excellent service and kept their health well, and there was little very serious sickness either among soldiers or coolies during the expedition; but on the return march of the Cachar column they suffered from

cholera of some, though not extreme, severity. The effect of the expedition seems to have been to introduce that disease among the Lushais, and it is said that its ravages have created great terror among them. Possibly they may even feel the effects of the expedition in this shape almost as much as they did our military power.

Future prospects.

The Lieutenant-Governor is sanguine that there is good reason to believe that the expedition will give peace to our borders for a long time to come. Every effort will be made to cultivate the friendly intercourse with the tribes which has resulted from the judicious manner in which the expedition was concluded by bringing them to terms. The impression left on our officers is that they are far from savages, being in many respects intelligent and civilized and possessed of some arts. Further negotiations and explorations are in progress, and arrangements are being made to complete the surveys of the country of which we acquired a partial knowledge during the expedition.

The Garo Hills.

There was during the year a good deal of uneasiness at several points of our very extended eastern frontier, as there almost always is; but there was no actual outbreak. In the Garo Hills our officers failed to obtain satisfaction from the independent tribes for the murder of one of the survey establishment. Captain La Touche did indeed move forward with a police force to press for surrender of the murderers, and not only did he obtain fair professions, but several new villages attorned to him, acknowledging British authority, and engaged to pay tribute. When, however, his back was turned, they very soon came down again, massacred a number of the subject Garos, and created much alarm even in the plains of Mymensing. They were repressed, and the panic allayed. But it has been judged necessary to take measures for reducing these tribes to peace and order, and arrangements are being made for that purpose.

This Garo territory is not by any means very remote. It is the western portion of the hill country lying between the valley of Assam and the most eastern districts of Bengal, and is thus an unexplored tract jutting out into the very heart of our territory. Since the Khasi and Jynteah Hills have been brought under complete control, it is, in fact, in some sense an island in the midst of British dominions. Considerable progress has already been made in

introducing our authority in a part of the Garo Hills, and the time has come when it is fit to explore and pacify the remainder.

The Khasi Hills.

There has been complete peace in the Khasi and Jynteah Hills for some years, since the Jynteah rebellion was suppressed. Among the Khasiahs small federal democracies prevail, and the principal difficulties have been two—*first*, bribery and corruption at elections; and *second*, the disposition of the weaker among the confederate states to secede whenever they disagree with the majority.

Bhutan.

There seemed to be some reason to think that the withdrawal of some of our troops from Lower Assam on account of the Lushai expedition had led the Bhutan authorities to adopt a somewhat insolent tone. At any rate, in the course of discussions arising from claims on their part, it was brought to the notice of the Government that the boundary between the eastern portion of Bhutan and Assam had never been defined, and was indeed quite unsettled, it not being clear whether the crest of the first range of hills or the foot of the hills was really the boundary; while in either case these lines are very vague and uncertain. It also appeared that the small hill territory about Dewangiri specially ceded by treaty, not being actually occupied by us, nor its boundaries defined, and being at certain seasons a place of some resort, had become a sort of no man's land, in which complications were threatened. It has been decided to define the boundary in the ensuing cold season.

Immediately east of Bhutan the hills are occupied by Bhutea tribes quite independent of Bhutan, and who seem to be different in character and come down very freely to the plains. There is also by this route the nearest, and it is believed the easiest, route to Lassa by way of Towang, and people of many races of high Asia come to a great fair held in Assam. Endeavours were made by Colonel Haughton, Commissioner of Cooch Behar, and in charge of the political relations with Sikkim and Bhutan, to open communications for commercial purposes with the Thibetan authorities, but without success, his letters not having been answered. The British Ambassador at Pekin was asked to assist, but has replied that he is unable to do so during the minority of the Emperor of China. It is believed that the Sikkim passes are

Intercourse with Thibet.

not good, while Bhutan is not at present likely to be open to us, and it may be best to cultivate the existing trade with Assam by the Towang route above mentioned.

Sub-Himalayan tribes.

East of the Bhuteas, to the farthest extremity of Assam, the Himalayas are occupied by a great variety of tribes of a wholly savage character, and we have only somewhat complicated relations with the tribes of the outer ridges, and a very imperfect dominion over the tracts at the base of the hills. The usual interviews and giving of presents have been carried on, one or two difficulties have been adjusted, and there has been no serious collision. Our relations with the civilised and semi-subject Indo-Chinese tribes of the eastern extremity of Assam have been friendly.

Throughout Assam the exterior boundary has never been laid down, and is in fact extremely indefinite. After a good deal of correspondence the question is still under consideration in what parts it is possible to lay down a line, and in what British authority shades away so imperceptibly into independence, that this cannot yet be done.

It may be mentioned that during the Lieutenant-Governor's tour in Assam he was able to see living specimens of almost every tribe and people, civilised and savage, of which we have heard the names.

The Nagas and tea-planting.

On the south of the Assam valley tea planting has been pushed so far into tracts hitherto unoccupied as to give rise to very troublesome questions with the various Naga tribes, which are for political purposes British as between us and Burmah, but whose boundaries and relations to us are not well defined. One or two quarrels with tea planters gave rise to considerable uneasiness during the year under report; especially one in which the representatives of an offended tribe went through theatrical demonstrations of hostility after a Red Indian fashion and vowed terrible vengeance. The matter was made up at a cheap rate, but we are always liable to complications with people who are familiar enough to have constant dealings with our settlers and yet are under no regular control.

Trade in India rubber.

In addition to questions connected with tea, wild elephants, coal, timber dues, and other matters, the India rubber trade is a subject of great complication all over the frontier. The rubber is chiefly found in forests beyond our settled

boundaries, and the dealings of speculators with the tribes must give rise to quarrels and difficulties if some general regulation and control is not maintained on the part of Government.

The Naga Hills district.

In what is called the Naga Hills district, Captain Butler, the officer stationed within the hills in immediate communication with the formidable Angamee Nagas, has been singularly successful in restraining them and rendering them amenable to a certain control. But there have been considerable complications owing to feuds between tribes whom we are supposed to control and those who are supposed to be subject to the Munipore Raja, aggravated by an unsettled boundary. A sort of military colony of Kookies, brought in from the south, and settled by us in a deserted part of the hills a good many years ago, has also proved to be somewhat beyond control. These intertribal difficulties culminated during the year in one particularly shocking massacre, on an unusually large scale, of people owing allegiance to Munipore. Captain Butler succeeded in getting the offending tribes to acknowledge his authority, and in token of submission and repentance they even restored the skulls, a concession believed to be unprecedented, and which seems to have been accepted as an unwonted satisfaction. Since, however, it is most necessary to put a stop to this state of things, the jurisdiction is now to be accurately defined, and a surveyor will shortly be deputed to mark out the boundary between Naga land and Munipore, and to carry the survey as far as possible along the watershed ridge which divides our political control from that of the King of Burmah.

Settlement of Munipore and Naga boundary.

A subject of much importance in connection especially with the eastern frontier and our little wars there, is the supply of fire-arms, a subject mentioned in last year's report. It is believed that none of the tribes manufacture fire-arms, and till comparatively recent times they had few. They have got them much more generally of late years, either through British India or through Burmah, and the demand for them on all the eastern frontier is great. Attention has been drawn to the large importation of cheap fire-arms into Calcutta, and it is believed that the rules have not sufficed to restrain persons connected with river steamers and others from trafficking in fire-arms, while arms which may honestly

Trade in fire-arms.

enough find their way into the hands of servants of tea planters and others, naturally gravitate in the end to the hills, where the best price is paid for them. The subject is one of much difficulty. It has formed the subject of a correspondence with the Government of India, and is still under consideration.

Hills of Western Bengal.

Keonjhur.

In the hill districts to the west of Bengal entire peace has been happily maintained throughout the year. Keonjhur, one of the principal of the Tributary Mehals of Orissa, which was the scene of such serious disturbances in 1868, has since been supervised by a British officer and is completely pacified, and the wild hill aborigines, who there so long set us at defiance, have tendered complete allegiance and accepted a clear and satisfactory revenue settlement. If the young Raja turns out as well as the Commissioner now promises, we may hope that there will be no more trouble. In a long tour in which the Commissioner, Mr. Ravenshaw, visited both the tribes so lately rebellious, and those not very long ago notorious for human sacrifices, he reports that he found the hill people distinguished by a remarkable desire for education, and he made arrangements for devoting the liquor-tax to that object.

Aboriginal peoples of Chota Nagpore.

In the Chota Nagpore country the excitement among the large aboriginal population caused by the attempt of Hindu farmers and speculators to interfere with the lands and ancient privileges of the headmen and office-bearers of the aboriginal villages, has been completely quieted by the operations of the Commission appointed to ascertain and record the tenures and rights of these people; for though the Commission has yet got over but a small portion of the ground, it has given confidence to all. Many of the cheerful and industrious aborigines of this country have been converted to Christianity, and it was at one time said that the doctrines of equality which they brought among their fellows led to an agitation against the tyranny of landlords somewhat dangerous to the established order of things. It appears, however, that the grievances were real, and these having been remedied the agitation has quieted down. Under the excellent and patriarchal rule of the Commissioner, Colonel Dalton, who has so long presided over these territories, there is no pleasanter and apparently happier part of Her Majesty's dominions, notwithstanding that the wages of

a man are about a shilling a week, and of a woman about eight pence.

The Lieutenant-Governor can testify to the well-being of this country, having lately visited it. He then took occasion to make public presentations to the native chiefs who gave most excellent assistance in the suppression of the Keonjhur disturbance, at a time when our troops were prostrated by the climate, and especially to Raja Bindesiree Pershad Sing Deo, C.S.I., Regent of Sirgoojah, and Chief of Oodypore, a small lapsed State given to him by the Government for his services.

Sonthalia.

In the Sonthal country, the hilly tract between Behar and Bengal, forming an angle round which the Ganges runs in its course from the one province to the other, there was during the year an uneasiness and restlessness which occasioned considerable anxiety to the Government. The upper hills are occupied by the tribes so predatory in the last century, whom Cleveland reclaimed, and who are now perfectly quiet and apparently a declining race; but the lower valleys and more level tracts are cultivated by a much more numerous and progressive aboriginal people, the Sonthals, who have reclaimed this country from the jungle to a very remarkable degree. While part of the tract owning no landlord has been settled and well managed by Government officers direct under a ryotwar system, and the people are there prosperous and content, another part is included in the permanent settlement of Bengal, having been given away, as almost worthless jungle, to zemindars, and to ghatwals the service holders bound to repress the hillmen and keep the peace. Here as the Sonthals reclaim the jungle, they find

Causes of Sonthal agitation.

that landlords appear to claim full landlord rights over them, rack-rent them, and make over the lands rendered fertile by their hard toil to intruding strangers from the plains. The money-lenders also find this hardworking, but somewhat improvident and hard-drinking people, an easy prey to usurious practices. But the Sonthals are a clannish, hot-headed race; they cannot understand the difference between law and justice. In 1854, driven mad by

The rebellion of 1854, and consequent system.

what they considered the wrongs inflicted by our courts, they broke out into a bloody rebellion, which was only put down after a long campaign, attended by great sufferings and

severities. After that rebellion an Act was passed giving the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal almost complete power to make rules to take the place of the regular laws. For a time the country was governed on patriarchal principles, and the Sonthals were cherished and protected. But time passed, and the rebellion did not long remain fresh in the minds of our rapidly changing Indian officers. The East Indian Railway, carried along the strip between the hills and the Ganges, formerly dense jungle, much opened up the country, while a road was run right through the heart of the Sonthal country. Thus it was put into immediate communication with one of the most populous and highly rented parts of these provinces, and speculators swarmed in more than ever.

Return to regular administration.

A later Lieutenant-Governor saw fit to declare that there was no reason for exempting the Sonthal Pergunnahs from the general laws, and to direct that they should be brought as soon as practicable under the system in force in the other parts of the Bengal Provinces. From that time regular laws and courts were again introduced, and the administration was more and more assimilated to that of the regular districts.

The Sonthal village constitution is peculiar; the Bengal laws do not provide for it. The individual Sonthals would not fight in our courts their rights as ryots under the Bengal rent law; they looked only to their headman or 'manjhee' as representing the community; and the Bengal law said nothing of manjhees; so it was held that the manjhees had no rights. It resulted that the zemindars and the farmers of the revenue under them either raised the village rents under the threat of turning out the manjhee, or actually did turn him out, putting in Hindu farmers and others in the place of the men ejected. This had certainly gone on to a very considerable extent, sadly disorganising the cherished institutions of the Sonthals and causing great discontent among them.

Renewed agitation in 1871.

In the summer of 1871 the Commissioner brought to the notice of the Lieutenant-Governor the excitement prevailing among the Sonthals, large parties of whom either gathered to make tumultuous appeals to British officers, or collected in the jungles in the great hunting parties, which are to some extent their wont. Several serious panics occurred among the Bengalee and other residents, and on one occasion the Railway Volunteers turned out in force to meet an enemy who never came. Happily there was no real outbreak; but the Lieutenant-Governor, on looking into the matter, was satisfied that

the Sonthals had a real grievance. He thought it also a mistake to govern such a people by too complicated laws and too formal courts. He accordingly took upon himself to give certain assurances to the Sonthals, which for the most part quieted them. At the same time extreme caution was necessary, as these people are ready enough to see the advantage of agitation, and might be easily led to make demands with which it would, under the law of property established in Bengal, be impossible to comply: hence a good deal of continued anxiety. Eventually the whole question having been fully discussed and considered in communication with the Government of India and the Secretary of State, the territory was declared by the Secretary of State subject to the Act of 33 Vict., which enables the Government of India to sanction summary regulations proposed by the local Government; and a Regulation for the peace and good government of the Sonthal Pergunnahs prepared by this Government eventually received the sanction of His Excellency Lord Napier, then Viceroy and Governor-General, and his Council. This Regulation, which will be more particularly detailed under the head of Legislative, gave the Lieutenant-Governor full power to appoint officers to make a settlement of landed rights, to restore dispossessed manjhees and others, to settle rents, and to record the customs and usages of the people. It also introduced a usury law limiting the accumulation of interest on debts; and it laid down what laws were to be in force in the Sonthal Pergunnahs, and what were left to the discretion of the Government to introduce or withdraw as found desirable from time to time.

New Sonthal Regulation.

The measures under this Regulation are now in progress, and the country has since been perfectly quiet. The usury law seems to be accepted by creditors as reasonable, as well as by debtors, and no complaints are made regarding it. The settlement of landed rights will be more difficult, and the subject is yet not without anxiety, involving as it does many complications. It always must be the disadvantage of concessions not made till some show of excitement has called attention to the matter, that those to whom concessions are made under such circumstances may demand too much; and the Sonthals being, though very quiet in ordinary times, hot-headed in times of excitement, may be disappointed if they do not now get more than is possible. Still it is hoped that by holding an even hand between the fair claims of property on one hand, and the fair rights and claims of the

occupant reclaimers of the soil on the other, justice will be done, and both parties will settle down into a contented acquiescence.

These last pages concern only what may be called the fringes of Bengal. Throughout our regular settled provinces, British peace and British authority were nowhere in any degree disturbed or endangered throughout the year.

Assassinations of the Viceroy and Officiating Chief Justice.

The most striking and lamentable social events were the unhappy assassinations of two of the greatest men in the country; one of them the greatest of all. The Officiating Chief Justice of the High Court of Judicature was struck down by an assassin on the very steps of the Town Hall of Calcutta, where his court was held; and though the late Viceroy, Earl Mayo, was not actually murdered among us, he had so recently embarked from Calcutta on a short business tour, and the reception of his remains and the ceremonial in regard to them so soon after occupied all Calcutta, that it was felt as if that city were almost the actual scene of the great calamity. Here, as everywhere else in India, the social grief and feeling of public loss were overwhelming; the intensity of that feeling and the greatness of the loss to India, can hardly be depicted in this report.

Yet it is a singular testimony to the stability of our political system and to the belief that it does not depend on any one man, however exalted and however able, that the assassination of the Viceroy, following as it did the assassination of the Head of the law, never caused the slightest appreciable variation in the value of the public funds in the Calcutta market. The day following the receipt of the news happened to be a native festival and close holiday, and there was no opportunity of judging the possible momentary effect of such news, but the day after that, when the places of business opened, there was no such effect.

The late Chief Justice Norman was a man who never had, and could not have had, an enemy. Not only was he beloved by all his fellow countrymen, but probably in all India there was no man whose feeling towards the natives was more kindly, who more actively interested himself in their welfare, and who was more accessible to them and more ready to listen to all they had to say and to sympathise with them. He was in every way the most popular of men, and so simple in his habits that any one might approach him at any time. He was murdered in the most public place possible, where he was surrounded

The assassin Abdulla.

by crowds, by an assassin who made, and could make, no attempt to escape. The man died on the scaffold without giving any intelligible account of his motives. He neither showed any feeling for his own situation nor attempted any bravado; he would only say that he was enraged or excited and felt impelled to the act. The crime was of course the subject of much investigation and anxious inquiry. Rumours and suspicions of political conspiracy were rife, but the closest inquiry failed to show any grounds for such suspicions. The man's history was to some extent traced. He was a foreigner, but for some years had lead a wandering unsettled life in India; a morose, peculiar, solitary man, of limited intellect, yet with a desire to acquire clerkly qualifications, in which he had constantly failed; religious in his own gloomy sort of way. One part of his history seemed to be clearly made out, viz. that while attending the Government school at Mirzapore, where he kept aloof from his fellows and refused to make obeisance to the Bishop with the others when that dignitary visited the school, he had shown symptoms of a homicidal mania, and had even there talked of killing the Judge; but being told by his religious adviser that it was unlawful to do so, he went off in disgust.

The assassin Sher Ali.

The convict-murderer of the late Earl Mayo was a mountaineer of a bloody race, who had fled from his own country as the result of blood feuds; who was transported for assassinating in British territory a man of the opposite faction; and who was then put to menial work with sharp instruments, in a climate and condition most abhorrent to one of his race and temperament. His antecedents and position were thus such that it was not necessary to seek very far for the motives and the means of the murder. Still careful and full inquiry was instituted in order to ascertain whether he might possibly have received any communications from India, or might in any degree have been a political tool. It was found that there was no trace whatever of any thing of the kind, and the murderer's latest communications were with his relatives on the frontier, and related only to his fields and his wife, and the last news of murders committed by this faction and that.

It is to be remarked that in both these lamentable cases the murderers were Pathans or Afghans from beyond our frontier. The Afghans are nominally Mahomedans, but generally as little fanatic or devout as any people on the face of the earth—a hard worldly race, with whose acts religious scruples little interfere. It is only where the

tribes have mixed with quasi-Hindu peoples in the valleys approaching towards the Cashmeree races that they seem to show any religious capacity. The murderer of Lord Mayo, a man from the Khyber country, was probably entirely devoid of religious feeling. The murderer of Chief Justice Norman, whose actual birthplace was never ascertained (though he spoke freely the Pathan language, Pushtoo), was, it has been seen, probably more or less under the influence of perverted religious ideas.

Indigo planters and ryots.

There was no serious political or class excitement in any part of the regularly settled country throughout the year. The antagonism between indigo planters and ryots, which some years ago nearly caused an '*indigo war*' in Bengal Proper, has now entirely subsided there.

In Bengal.

In Eastern Bengal indigo has a good deal given way to the spread of jute and other cultivation, and in Central Bengal also the indigo cultivation has diminished. Equal justice being given to all parties, the relations between the present planters and the ryots are unobjectionable, and a fair price is given for an important staple, which now, it is to be hoped, will hold its place.

In Behar.

In Behar, on the other hand, indigo cultivation has continued to increase, and has been of late years very profitable. The planters there hold very extensive leases of villages, partly from the native landholders, and partly from the Court of Wards, which manages the great estates of several minor proprietors; and the relations between the planters and the ryots are somewhat more feudal and less mercantile than might be desired. Some of our officers assert that our dominion is unpopular in Behar, and several assaults on our Magistrates, which have occurred in the course of the year, might seem to give some colour to the assertion. These assaults, however, do not seem to be in any degree connected with one another, and they were mostly of a petty and personal character, so that it is probably a mere accidental coincidence that they should have happened in the course of a few months. It is, however, certain that on one or two occasions, previous to the year under report, there was considerable excitement on questions connected with indigo, which were only calmed by judicious concessions in respect of the prices paid, concessions which the planters can now well afford to make.

Difficulties in North Behar.

During the Lieutenant-Governor's visit to North Behar, he was in some places beset by crowds making

complaint regarding indigo cultivation in a way that has not occurred to him in other districts; but he found that almost all these complaints had reference to one somewhat overgrown concern, and that such complaints were not general, or at any rate were not preferred in such a form. The whole subject is one which requires careful management, as a very little action, or even a very few words, might cause great complications on one side or other. On the one hand the Lieutenant-Governor would be very unwilling to injure one of the most prosperous and profitable industries in the country; on the other, he is inclined to think that indigo has already occupied as large a proportion of certain descriptions of soil in the densely populated districts of North Behar as is desirable. In matters of pure merchandise things may most properly be left to find their own level; but in a case where the cultivation is to some extent feudal, and not wholly and absolutely voluntary in all senses of the word, it seemed to the Lieutenant-Governor that, under all the circumstances, it was not proper that the Government officers in charge of wards' estates should give further direct facilities for an extension of the system by letting fresh villages to indigo planters. He has therefore discouraged new leases of the kind on wards' estates in excess of those already held by planters, while he has at the same time directed that every freedom and facility shall be given to planters to obtain indigo on mercantile principles from villages over which they have no dominion, a system which he would very much like to see more generally introduced.

Action on wards' estates.

In the south-eastern districts of the delta, where, as in most districts of Bengal Proper, the agricultural ryots are chiefly Mahomedans, it is the fashion, whenever a landlord quarrels with his tenants, to stigmatize the latter as 'Ferazees,' a sect professing reformed tenets and doctrines of equality, and to attribute to their conduct a political character. Such was the case in the Backergunge district, where a difference arose between the ryots and a European lessee to whom a great Government estate had been farmed in the time of the Lieutenant-Governor's predecessor; and in another more recent case on the estate of a great European landlord in the Dacca district, where a serious breach of the peace actually occurred. In both cases, however, it turned out that there was a good deal to be said on both sides. In the Backergunge case especially it appeared that the demand of the landlord for an enhanced rent was not in the present season warranted by law, and

Landlord and tenant in East Bengal.

that he could only proceed by regular process, after giving due notice, to try his right to enhance in the following year. The Lieutenant-Governor resisted somewhat strong representations of the necessity of extraordinary measures, refusing to adopt them till they were shown to be necessary; and the result was that the ryots paid quietly the old rents which they were legally bound to pay, and say that they are ready to contest the question in the courts as regards the future. There is, however, no doubt that the people of these tidal districts are hot-blooded and pugnacious more than other Bengalees, and more given to the use of arms, which they possess in abundance. Although there is, the Lieutenant-Governor believes, no serious element of disaffection in their religion *per se*, still the Ferazee doctrines, which so many of them hold, might, in the event of serious agrarian questions, form a bond and rallying cry among them, and this part of the country is thus not without some elements of political anxiety. The Lieutenant-Governor has expressed his satisfaction that many landlords of these parts have found it to be their best policy to take a bonus from the better ryots (who are often prosperous and well-to-do), and to give them perpetual leases at fixed rents. The registration records show a very large creation of such tenures in these districts, and the Lieutenant-Governor trusts to this distribution of the rights of property upon a wide basis as the best conservative force, and the best security for peace and observance of the law.

Ferazee doctrines and land rights.

The Ferazee sect does not prevail in the Bengal districts north of the Ganges, which are even more Mahomedan than the tidal districts. There the people and their religion seem to be of a singularly quiet and unaggressive character.

The enhancement of rents has been alluded to as a cause of excitement in particular cases; but it may be said that the rights of enhancement conferred on landlords by Act X of 1859 have not been the occasion of much serious excitement or great social disturbance in these provinces generally in the past year. Of late years the courts have shown a tendency to scrutinize thoroughly the grounds of enhancement, and to watch the cases affecting great classes of ryots, who are individually unable to contest particular cases with zemindars on equal terms in respect of money and legal aid. And the zemindars of Bengal have not generally been very pushing in

Enhancement of rents.

In Bengal.

this respect. It was principally in connection with the indigo question that the planters of Bengal Proper fought and lost the battle of an unlimited right of enhancement of the rents of the ryots possessed of a right of occupancy. The zemindars are most frequently content if they can get extra cesses and benevolences, illegal but which the ryots certainly prefer to enhancement of rent. In Behar, where the rights of ryots are, it is believed, less respected than in Bengal, the indigo system has rather tended to keep down rents, as it did in Bengal till the ryots refused to grow indigo on the old terms. An ordinary farmer of a village or group of villages, under the fashion prevailing on most great estates, makes it his sole business to exploit the rents, whereas an indigo planter farms the village for the sake of the indigo, and generally leaves the rents alone, so long as the prescribed tale of indigo cultivation is maintained.

In Behar.

The prosecutions instituted in former years, at the instance of the Government of India, against persons accused of having some years before forwarded men and money to the fanatic colony at Sitana on the Punjab frontier (so long hostile to the Sikhs before us and to the British frontier administration afterwards), were brought to a close during the year by the trial of the remaining prisoners at Patna and the disposal of the case in appeal by the High Court. Some were acquitted and others found guilty and sentenced to imprisonment for life and for long terms. No prosecutions of a political character are now pending.

Wahabi trials.

The Government of Bengal has no army, and since the police was put on its present footing it has had no quasi military battalions or other force except a few armed police in one or two frontier districts. When a force is wanted for any special purpose, it must be specially organized by drafts from the police of different districts, some of whom, employed to guard treasuries, jails, &c., are more or less taught to handle fire-arms and affect a semi-military style. This course has now been followed in order to obtain a force to deal with the Garos. Looking, however, to the liability to frontier wars of a very petty character, and to the inconvenience and inefficiency of a force extemporised in the manner above described, it may be a question whether it would not be better if this Government had two or three irregular battalions fitted for frontier and jungle service. There is generally a difficulty

The army in Bengal.

in obtaining military aid on a small scale for such frontier affairs, and in associating small military detachments with civil or political officers and with bodies of police, on such occasions. The Lieutenant-Governor has no doubt that when the Government of India can afford to send two Generals and a number of the best regiments in the country to crush obstreperous frontier tribes, as in the case of the Lushai campaign, the work will be much better and more effectually done than by any force which the local Government is likely to obtain; but when the work is to be done on a smaller case, as in the case of the projected Garo expedition, a good battalion of no very expensive character would be better than any number of the present police that can be collected.

In the settled districts the need for military aid is happily most rare. The force employed in the populous provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, is extraordinarily small. The Lieutenant-Governor was consulted regarding its distribution during the past year, and said that he was opposed to any reduction of the force now stationed here. He said the broad question as to whether Bengal could be permanently held with so small a force as at present would depend on the solution of some great agrarian problems which may lead to eventual trouble, and which in some districts might be aggravated by differences of religion between landlord and tenant. He accepted the present distribution as perhaps in most cases the best, and was, on grounds of climate, in favour of retaining a European regiment at Hazaribagh. But he drew particular atenttion to the fact that, in the whole of Bengal Proper, north and east of Calcutta, there is not a single European soldier, with the exception of the few men at Darjeeling. He expressed an opinion that some native troops at least should be kept within reach of the south-eastern districts of the Bengal delta.

The census.

In many respects the most important measure of internal administration in the year as regards our knowledge of the country and the materials afforded for administrative plans, was the census of the population. This measure has been very successfully carried out, and the result has been almost, it may be said, to revolutionize our ideas both in regard to the amount of the population of these provinces, and relatively in regard to its distribution in different districts, races, and religions; while by showing that the numbers vastly exceeded any former computation, it has

wholly altered our calculations with respect to the incidence of taxation, the consumption of salt, and many other matters.

There had long been question of a census of Bengal in connection with a census of all India, but there seemed to be great difficulties in the way. In very old times, when we did not entertain the views in regard to administration which have more recently prevailed, the Government seems to have arrived at a computation which, supposing the population to have increased as it may have increased in the last two or three generations, may not have been very extravagantly wide of the mark either in the whole or as regards particular districts; but in more recent times the theory of government by judicial institutions alone has prevailed, and there has been less and less executive interference. Partial computations of the population, not without some value, have here and there been made by individual officers in some districts; but on the other hand in other districts mistakes, clerical errors perpetuated without observation, and other causes, have rendered the estimates much more wide of the mark than those of former days; and the official statements have become more and more discrepant. As an illustration of the extreme point to which want of statistical knowledge of the people had reached in these provinces, the following figures are given showing the difference between the population of some important districts as given in grave statistical returns by the authority of Government within the last few years, and stated in the Administration Report published in 1870, "according to the latest returns," and that now ascertained by census.

	Population according to return of 1870.	Population according to present census.
Nuddea (perhaps the most cared for and most fully administered metropolitan district in Bengal) ...	568,712	1,812,795
Furreedpore	147,127	1,012,589
Pubna	337,679	1,211,594
Cuttack	215,835	1,449,784.
Monghyr	755,389	1,842,986
Kamroop or Gowhatty	80,861	561,681

It will be seen that in these cases the population previously returned varied from a third to a seventh of that now ascertained.

Mode of taking census.

The Government of India desired to take a census of the whole country in great detail. In other provinces a succession of previous censuses of a rough character had

paved the way for such a measure; in Bengal there had been no such previous advance, the people were unaccustomed to the idea of a census, and the large executive establishments available in other provinces were wholly wanting. The Government of Bengal protested much that all that was required could not be done, and explained that both official and indigenous agency were wholly wanting, and that if the work was to be done an expensive hired establishment would be necessary. In view, however, of the urgency of the Government of India, some preliminary arrangements and experiments were made. This was the state of things when the present Lieutenant-Governor assumed the administration. He also, looking to all that had been said of the want of instruments, and also to his own want of personal knowledge of such instruments as existed, was averse to plunging at once into such a census as the Government of India proposed. And at this time, owing to financial exigencies, the census of all India was postponed. A few months later the Government of India again recurred to their wish to take a general census, and the Lieutenant-Governor having then considered the matter, expressed his willingness to make the attempt provided only the Government of India would consent to modify their requirements so far as regards these provinces. He asked that all the details required in provinces differently constituted should not be sought in Bengal, and expressed a strong opinion that to seek too much would lead to failure of all. He proposed, however, to give in the returns all the information regarding the people really necessary for practical purposes and attainable. His proposal was that the names, castes, and professions of all heads of houses and adult males should be recorded, but that the women and children in each house should be numbered, not named, the caste and profession of the head of the family being sufficient to distinguish the family. Religion was also to be stated (that is the great religious divisions, not sects), and adults or grown youths were to be distinguished from children under 12. These were the main points to be shown, with a few additional particulars which need not be recited here. A simultaneous census in one night was not to be required, but each district and division was to be taken in a manner as nearly simultaneous as was possible with reference to the circumstances of each, provided that the whole must be completed between December 1871 and March 1872.

The Government of India accepted these terms and the work was then actively undertaken. The result has been, the Lieutenant-Governor hopes and believes, successful beyond expectation, and justifies him in thinking that the extent of information sought was enough and not too much The officers of the Bengal administration, both magistrates, police, and others, stirred on this occasion to show what they could do, exerted themselves in a way which deserves the Lieutenant-Governor's warmest thanks. As the arrangements proceeded, indigenous agencies were found to exist to a degree far beyond what had been supposed. Old institutions, officially supposed to be long ago dead and gone, were still found to survive in many places, and rural agencies condemned and suppressed by the Board of Revenue turned out to exist in several parts of the country and were utilised. An Act of the Bengal Council required the assistance of landholders, and it was given as fairly as could have been expected. An officer of singular aptitude superintended the operations, Mr. Beverley, C.S., the Inspector-General of Registration, whose exertions have been untiring and most well-directed; and though the Lieutenant-Governor, amid many trades and employments, happened never before to have superintended a census, this want was more than supplied by the experience and ability of Mr. C. Bernard, one of the Secretaries to this Government, to whose assistance the Lieutenant-Governor owes very much on this occasion. The result of the system followed has been that scarcely any special establishments have been employed for anything but the work of addition and computation, the local work having been done by the ordinary establishments and indigenous or voluntary agency; and the cost will be, it is believed, as small in proportion as in any province in India.

Successful result.

If we had expected to get absolute accuracy, the plan of taking the census on various dates within a moderate period would no doubt have been inconsistent with such an expectation. But the Lieutenant-Governor believes that no census in India can probably be without a considerable margin of inaccuracy, and that within that margin the small inaccuracies resulting from the taking different tracts on different days are as nothing. If so much be admitted, the details furnished are, the Lieutenant-Governor considers, sufficiently ample and sufficiently accurate.

The Lieutenant-Governor's own feelings were, he confesses, very much those expressed by more than one district

officer, and entertained he believes by many more, viz. that they began by doubting whether the returns would be worth the paper on which they were written and ended by thinking them wonderfully good and trustworthy. This last opinion appears everywhere in the reports, and all that has been learned of tests applied by superior officers and others, and by some independent observers, goes to confirm the belief. Some mistakes and inaccuracies on a small scale there must no doubt be, but the general result is, the Lieutenant-Governor believes, surprisingly accurate.

It may be necessary to explain that it is at any rate impossible that the population can have been exaggerated, since the very large results may suggest question on that point, and the result of the more correct census of the towns of Madras and Bombay (where formerly there seems to have been disposition to exaggerate the population) and of the later censuses of some districts of the North-Western Provinces, where the Lieutenant-Governor thinks that in the census of 1852 some payments were made or expected with reference to the number counted, seem to show that exaggerations may occur. In the present Bengal census no one had any interest in exaggeration. The officers, as has been seen, did not undertake the work with enthusiasm, or with the idea that it was to show the importance of their districts. They collected the returns for each village and forwarded them to the central office, not knowing the result. That result, as showing a population enormously larger than previous computation, was wholly unexpected. The fact that the name and other particulars of each adult male were written out and sent in to the central office, was alone sufficient to check exaggeration on the part of enumerators who were not paid by numbers. Altogether it may be said that, whatever the degree of accuracy of the census, the margin of inaccuracy must be on the whole on the side of understating. The population may be more, but cannot be less, than that returned.

Total population.

The census computations show the total number of persons counted in the provinces under the Government of Bengal to be 66,856,859.

The census was fully carried out in all the central and western districts, including the tributary estates of Orissa and Chota Nagpore, but has not been completely effected in some of the eastern border districts, where there were

political difficulties, increased by the circumstance that a house or poll-tax is the ordinary form of taxation in the unsettled Indo-Burmese districts. The Chittagong Hill Tracts and Garo Hills (so far as they own British allegiance) being the scene of war or uneasiness, it was avowed that a full census could not be taken. Some of the Assam tribes beyond the ordinary land revenue settlement were not counted, and especially in the farthest district of Upper Assam (Lukhimpore), considerable tracts of country marked as British territory and inhabited by tribes who owe us a theoretical allegiance, but who in practice are not very directly ruled, were omitted. Owing to administrative accidents the Terai under the Darjeeling Hills and the adjoining Bhútan Dooars (ceded by Bhútan after the late war) were not properly counted. The whole of these are sparsely populated districts, and if we estimate them as supplying little more than the fraction of a million to make up a round figure, we get in round numbers a population of 67 millions.

Sikkim, Hill Tipperah, and the Nagas and other quasi-independent tribes of Assam, are neither counted nor estimated, because though within our political system they are not administered, and for the most part have not been explored. Bhutan and the Himalayan hill tribes to the east are wholly and entirely independent. Munipore is not under this Government.

Of the total 67 millions, 2 millions may be taken as the population of the tributary estates in which the Rajas and Chiefs exercise a prescribed jurisdiction, subject in greater matters to British courts and officers. Of these nearly 1,300,000 are in the Orissa Tributary Mehals, 400,000 in those of Chota Nagpore, and the remaining 300,000 may be taken to represent the tribes in the eastern frontier imperfectly counted.

This leaves 65 millions under direct British administration. Of these nearly 37 millions are in the great central province of Bengal Proper. Behar without the Sonthal Pergunnahs is just about half the area and population of Bengal, the population being 18½ millions, or with the Sonthal Pergunnahs, now attached to that province, upwards of 19½ millions. Orissa, excluding the tributary estates, is just over 3 millions. Chota Nagpore, similarly excluding such estates, has about 3½ millions, mostly aboriginal, and 2 millions are in Assam including the Gowalpara district, now attached to Cooch Behar, but geographically connected with Assam.

The various races.

These populations comprise several distinct nationalities, each mainly resident in one of the different provinces named; but as the national boundary does not in all cases precisely correspond with the provincial boundary, it may be mentioned that Bengal is inhabited throughout by Bengalees of Bengalee language and manners, and that they slightly overpass the Bengal boundaries. A small part of the Purneah district of Behar may be said to be Bengalee. Bengalees are also resident in some numbers in parts of the Sonthal Pergunnahs, and people speaking that language are numerous in the Maunbhoom district of Chota Nagpore. Altogether the Bengalee-speaking people may be taken to be about 38 millions.

Bengalees.

Hindustanees.

The people of Behar are Hindustanees, speaking the same language, and in their manners, &c., identical with the 40 or 50 millions of Hindustanees who inhabit the North-West Provinces, Oude, and parts of the Central Provinces, Rajpootana, &c. Besides Behar Proper a good many are resident in the Sonthal Pergunnahs; throughout the largest districts of Chota Nagpore they are numerous, and their language, manners, and civilisation, are those that come in there as the aborigines succumb to external influences. Altogether then the Hindee-speaking people of these provinces number about 20 millions.

Ooryas.

The Oorya-speakers of Orissa, plain and hill country together, are about 4 millions. This is not, however, the whole Oorya race, as they form the population of a great part of the Ganjam district in Madras, of Sumbulpore, &c., in the Central Provinces, and come somewhat over the border on the side of Bengal and Chota Nagpore. In Assam the semi-Bengalees of Gowalpara and Assamese of the upper districts scarcely make up 2 millions.

Assamese.

Aborigines.

The aborigines of the western hilly countries who still retain and habitually use their own aboriginal tongues are about 2 millions, while a million may be put down as speakers of various tongues in the eastern and northern sub-montane and hill tracts—besides the much larger number of frontier tribes excluded from the census.

Mixed races.

In regard to race it is impossible to draw any line between the aborigines and Hindu races, because they merge insensibly into one another. Besides the 2 millions of western aborigines using their own language, there are probably at least as many people in Chota Nagpore, the western districts of Bengal, and the confines of Behar, who avowedly belong to aboriginal tribes, but who have adopted the Hindee or Bengalee languages, and there are both in Bengal and Behar large numbers of low castes and out-castes which are probably very aboriginal in blood, and can scarcely be said to be Hindu in any real sense, though they may be put down as such. It is a great mistake to suppose that the Hindu religion is not proselytizing. The system of castes gives room for the introduction of any number of outsiders; so long as people do not interfere with established castes, they may form a new caste and call themselves Hindus if they like; and the Brahmins are always ready to receive all who will submit to them and pay them. The process of manufacturing Rajpoots from ambitious aborigines goes on before our eyes, and both in the west and the east many new Hindus exist who are in no degree Hindu in blood.

The low castes, on the other hand, keep to deities and religious observances of their own, are not recognised by Hindus, and are only put down as Hindus because they do not come under any other general name.

Number of Mahomedans.

The result of the census which may most surprise many people, is the large proportion of Mahomedans. They exceed 21 millions; so that there are perhaps more Mahomedans in these provinces than in any other country in the world, the dominions of the Grand Turk not excepted. They are nearly one-third of the whole population. But this hardly expresses their position, as they are very differently placed in different provinces. Here also the result falsifies many

Their distribution.

preconceived ideas. It is supposed in some quarters that the country about Patna is intensely Mahomedan, yet in the Patna district the Mahomedans are only about 12 per cent. of the whole, and even in the city of Patna only 24 per cent.; while in all Behar, excluding Purneah on the borders of Bengal, the Mahomedans are only between 10 and 11 per cent. of the population. The plains of Orissa are intensely Hindu, the few Mahomedans there being mere accidental settlers;

Mahomedans are also few in Chota Nagpore and Assam. But in Bengal Proper they are as nearly as possible half the whole population. If we exclude the Burdwan division, west of the Hooghly, which is allied to Orissa on one side and to aboriginal land on the other, and which contains few Mahomedans, we find that from the Hooghly eastward and northward, in Central, Eastern, and Northern Bengal, the Mahomedans are in a great majority. In these tracts they are not far short of 60 per cent. of the whole population, while in some of the most populous districts in the very centre of the country where the waters of the Ganges and Berhamputra unite, they are from 70 to 80 per cent.

The figures above given scarcely express their numbers relatively to the Hindus, since, as has been above explained, there are very many aboriginal and low caste people who may be classed as Hindus, but are not really so either in race or religion. It may be said that in some of the districts of Bengal the rural population is almost wholly Mahomedan, with the exception of some Helot classes and a kind of dominant class of high caste or educated Hindus, who almost everywhere appear as landholders, traders, and office holders.

Proportion of the sexes in Bengal.

In all the returns, the number of boys very much exceeds that of the girls, while the number of women equally exceeds that of the men. This is evidently to be accounted for by the fact that while the natives have very little notion of age, girls come to be counted as women much sooner than boys are counted as men.

Throughout these provinces the tendency to a general excess of males over females observed in some other parts of India nowhere appears. All the returns on the subject have not yet been received, but so far as they have gone, they seem to show the numbers of the two sexes to be on the whole as nearly as possible equal. There is a good deal of variation in this respect in different districts; in some men, in some women preponderating. It is believed that the returns are somewhat disturbed by the circumstance that the census season was that of the rice-reaping and storing, when large troops of reapers go from some of the earlier districts to the great rice districts of the north and east of Bengal, and the aboriginal laborers of Chota Nagpore having reaped their own crops go to earn wages in the plains. It seems probable,

so far as we have yet gone, that the lines of country affected by these disturbances will be for the most part traced, and that the variations may rather confirm than detract from the general accuracy of the census; but all this is being worked out by Mr. Beverley, and will soon be published in his report.

Local distribution of population.

The total area of the Bengal provinces, about 250,000 square miles, is not disproportionate to the great population, but more than half the area is composed of hilly or otherwise thinly populated tracts. By far the greater part of the population is packed into less than the other half of the area, and there the country is one of the most densely populated in the world.

Its density.

The plains of Bengal and Behar (excluding Orissa) may be said to comprise in round numbers about 100,000 square miles, with a population of about 53 millions, giving an average all over of upwards of 530 per square mile. Putting aside the suburban districts of Hooghly and 24-Pergunnahs, in parts of which the rural population is extraordinarily dense, the most densely populated rural district is Sarun, a district which adjoins Ghazeepore, believed to be the most populous district of the North-Western Provinces. The rate in Sarun is 777 per square mile. The adjoining great district of Tirhoot has a rate of 691 per square mile, and a total population which reaches the almost incredible number of 4,384,706 for a single district. There seems reason to suppose that the climate and soil of the Behar and Benares provinces are perhaps those most suited of any in India to the growth of a very large population.

On the other hand, some of the districts of Eastern Bengal are perhaps suited to maintain the largest number of mouths; for while in Behar labour is very cheap, the population seems full, and there is some emigration: in Rungpore, Pubna, Dacca, and Furreedpore, with a population of 600 to 650 per square mile, no one thinks of emigrating, and in some of these districts there is much demand for immigrant labour. Notably in Rungpore, with 619 souls per square mile, wages are extremely high (as wages go in India), indigenous labour is not to be had at any price, and there is a constant emigration from the west to supply the demand for labour.

There is a considerable variety in the surface of parts of the best provinces. All the districts of Behar south of the

Ganges run more or less into the southern hills; one of those on the north runs into the sub-Himalayan range. There is a large tract in the north of Bengal and north-east of Behar, comprising the districts of Dinagepore, Purneah, and Maldah (with the deserted city of Gour), which has been devastated by some rivers and choked up by others, and contains a good deal of waste land and marsh, in which the population is considerably below the average; while in the south again some of the tracts bordering on the Soonderbuns are comparatively unhealthy and thinly populated. Parts of some districts, such as Midnapore and Bancoorah on the west, and of Sylhet and Mymensing on the east, partake to some degree of the undulating character which marks an approach to the hill country.

If we eliminate the exceptional tracts, we shall find that the districts and parts of districts in the plains which are without special drawback cannot average less than about 650 souls per square mile, say one person per acre of gross area. In the best districts we can hardly allow less than 25 per cent. for rivers and marshes, roads and village sites, and other areas for any reason unculturable or uncultivated. Say we have 75 per cent. of cultivation, or three-fourths of an acre per head; we may allow one-third of that for products other than the food of the population,—oil-seeds and fibres, indigo and opium, and commercial exports of all kinds, including a large export of rice, as well as the dress and luxuries of the people of the country. The result will be that we can hardly have more than half an acre per head devoted to raising the food of the population. If this be compared with the acreage given to raise food by agriculture and grazing in England and the quantity of food imported there, it will probably be found that deficient as may be the Indian agriculture, it supports more people from the same breadth of cultivated land than any European countries.

Food-producing area per head.

On the other hand, this scantiness of the land compared to the population suggests the great social difficulties which may arise if population much further increases. And the same calculation renders terrible the thought of what might happen if the seasons, which our experiences of 1871-72 show to vary so much, should ever take so unhappy a turn as to lead to a really serious failure of the crops in these provinces.

Danger from excessive population.

With such free means of communication and good prices, the natives certainly do not hoard grain as they used to hoard it. In case of failure how many railways and steamers would suffice to bring food for 60 or 70 millions people, and where should we get food to bring? The grain-exporting countries of Asia are very few and small, the grain-importing countries are many. It may be some consolation, however, to observe that no very general failure throughout Bengal is known to have occurred in times with which we are acquainted. The inquiries of the Famine Commission regarding previous famines (which seem never to have been published) show from official papers that the accounts in popular histories of the great famine of 1770 have been greatly exaggerated. That was a very great and severe famine, but it did not extend to the eastern districts; and so far from the country relapsing into jungle from which it did not recover for generations, as has been supposed, the land revenue was within a year or two after the famine greater than it had ever been.

Absence of large towns.

No statement of occupations has yet been received, but one thing is very plain, viz. the extraordinary absence of large towns. The population beyond Calcutta and the suburbs seems to be almost wholly rural. Patna has 159,000 people, and there are a few second-rate towns in Behar. In Bengal Proper, the largest town is Dacca, 69,000. The supposed great city of Moorshedabad, the seat of the Nawab Nazim and his numerous followers, even including some outlying places not properly in the city, has only 46,000 souls; and there is not another town above 31,000, and scarcely a dozen averaging 20,000 each. Rungpore, the capital of the great district of Rungpore, contains 6,100 souls, and Jessore 6,152, each of these districts having a population over two millions.

Calcutta and suburbs.

On the other hand the population of Calcutta and its suburbs is really large. It is quite out of place to compare the nominal population of Madras and Bombay with Calcutta, because while they, it is believed, include large areas of a suburban character, Calcutta proper is really in some sense only what the City of London is to real London. The Circular Road, which separates Calcutta from the Suburbs, is a street which no stranger would suppose to be anything but a Calcutta street.

To get the population of Calcutta we must then take at least—

Calcutta	447,601
The Suburban Municipality	257,149
The further suburbs known as the North and South Suburban Towns	89,895
Howrah, the Southwark of Calcutta, on the opposite side of the river	97,784
Total population ...	892,429

It may further be said that the towns of Serampore, Chinsurah, and Hooghly on one railway, and Barrackpore, Dum-Dum, and other places on the other railway, are practically suburbs of Calcutta, and that of the 3,500,000 inhabitants of Hooghly and 24-Pergunnahs, a large proportion are in fact connected with Calcutta.

With reference to Calcutta proper it should, however, be mentioned that several statements seem to point to the suspicion that the census was less completely and accurately taken than in the rural districts, and on this subject the report of the Registrar-General is awaited.

No opposition to census.

The census has been carried out with surprisingly little opposition or excitement, considering how new it was to the people in most parts of the country. There seems to be no doubt that it was generally believed to be with a view to a tax; and that this should have been so, and yet no opposition encountered (except on one single occasion in an island in those hot-headed tidal districts already alluded to) was a much more favorable result than could well have been anticipated, and goes further than anything that has occurred in recent years to show the strength of our political position in these provinces.

Population of administrative divisions.

Whether executive and judicial establishments should be distributed with entire regard to area and population, is perhaps an open question; that they have actually been distributed in these provinces without respect of area and population, is a fact which the late census brings prominently forward. Districts have varied in size from about 1,500 to between 11,000 and 12,000 square miles, while the population of districts varies from a quarter of million to four millions and a quarter. One division, that of Patna, contains more

inhabitants than the Bombay Presidency; another division, Chittagong, has only a fourth the number of inhabitants and one-half the area of Patna. The population of police thannahs varies from 15,000 to 340,000; the population of sub-divisions varies from 15,000 to 800,000 or 900,000.

Increase of wages and of prices.

Large as the population is and probably increasing, it has been common among Europeans and others to speak of the great increase of wages, and sometimes to assume that the labouring classes are better off than heretofore. Some increase of wages there has no doubt been everywhere, or almost everywhere, and in some places that rise has been large. In the districts of cheap labour which throw off a surplus population, as in Chota Nagpore and Behar, the wages of coolies employed by Europeans may have risen from a penny halfpenny to nearly two pence per day in the first named province, and from two pence to two pence halfpenny or even three pence in that last mentioned. In some districts day labourers may even earn as much as six pence per day at busy seasons. Domestic servants, who formerly received 5 and 6 rupees per month, may have risen to 6 and 7 or 8 rupees.

Still it may be doubted whether in the country generally wages have risen more than prices and the expenses of living, and whether those who work for hire are materially better off than they used to be. At the same time there is perhaps more of regular work for regular wages, and there is probably less abject poverty than there once was. In fact in times of fair crops and ordinary prosperity there is not much appearance of want, and the people, even in hard times not amounting to downright famine, still maintain themselves as they always have in a wonderful way, without dependence on charity or public relief of any kind.

Condition of ryots.

The agricultural ryots or small farmers are a more numerous class in most districts than the labourers for hire, and as they benefit by a rise in prices, it may be hoped that their condition is improving in districts in which enhancement of rent does not follow too rapidly and too severely. It has been said that in Bengal direct enhancement has not been generally pushed to an extreme, and it is the Lieutenant-Governor's hope that more or less the most important class in the agricultural system, the ryots, are beginning to share to

some extent in the general prosperity of the country.

Discussion in 1871 on this subject.

In the past year there was brought to a close a prolonged discussion on the condition of the Bengal ryot, originating in the representation of the Calcutta Missionary Conference, who had dwelt on their miserable abject condition and the neglect of the vernacular education of the masses. Most of the officers who reported on the matter asserted that their condition was by no means everywhere and in all respects so bad, though it was admitted that they often suffered many things. There was in fact great variety of statements and opinions, but the general outcome was more favourable than the original statement. The Secretary of State in reviewing the whole matter said:—

"I am desirous of leaving the consideration of the means of providing primary education for the general body of the population to the unfettered discretion of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

"The subject of the general condition of the cultivating classes of Bengal is one upon which it is impossible to arrive at any safe conclusion on the evidence afforded by the papers. But it is one of such extreme importance that I am convinced it will commend itself to the early and careful consideration of the Government of Bengal, and I shall await with interest the result of the Lieutenant-Governor's inquiries and deliberations."

It will thus be seen the condition of the ryots is a subject which the present Government of Bengal is specially charged to watch over and care for. What it is proposed to do for primary education will be elsewhere alluded to.

As some index to the backwardness of the people of these provinces after so long a period of British rule and so much high education, it may be mentioned that the number of letters posted in the past year, excluding the Presidency towns, was but 14 millions, while the North-Western Provinces with less than half, and Bombay with less than one-fourth the population, had 16 millions and 12 millions respectively. The number of newspapers registered for transmission by post was 91 in Bengal to 114 in Bombay.

Emigration.

In connection with the subject of population the question of emigration may be here mentioned. Great as is the population, the great mass of the people are stationary agriculturists who manage to live in a contented enough manner

so long as great failures of the crops do not occur, and cheap as labour is in some parts of the country it cannot yet be said that the market in India for hired labour is yet overstocked. Up to this time people who chose to emigrate from Chota Nagpore or Behar to other districts in these provinces or to Calcutta generally find employment on wages sufficient as Indian wages go. Rungpore and some other districts, as well as our great public works, seem still capable of absorbing more labour than has yet presented itself. Assam still offers abundance of fertile soil. The circumstances are such that there is no unaided emigration and settlement there, but the tea planters are ready to take as much labour as they can get.

Within these provinces.

Still looking to the probability that population will soon press on the means of subsistence, the Lieutenant-Governor has thought that emigration to the colonies is decidedly a good thing for all parties, and that it may properly be encouraged in every legitimate way. It is therefore a matter of regret to him that it has been supposed in some quarters that he has been inimical to the emigration operations of the colonial agents, and has thereby checked emigration. Representations on the subject have been received both from some of the colonial authorities and from gentlemen connected with the sugar-producing interests.

To the colonies.

It is desirable then to explain that the Lieutenant-Governor's views have been only this, that however friendly to emigration, he is bound to protect the people from fraud and misrepresentation. The colonies vary so much, and the conditions of emigration to different colonies have been so various, while the poor and ignorant classes can so little distinguish one colony from another, that it is but fair that they should understand exactly the bargain they have made and the treatment they are to expect. If they find that they are deceived, or that there is uncertainty in the engagements, emigration is likely to suffer in the end far more than the slight check given to it by the enforcement of just and necessary rules. This last is what has occurred during the past year.

The Lieutenant-Governor's action explained.

The occurrence of several cases of kidnapping and inveigling women drew the attention of Government to the class of men employed as recruiters. It was found that the Protector of Emigrants, under whose license they act, had

really no knowledge of most of them, and that men of infamous character might ply the trade without hindrance or supervision. The Lieutenant-Governor directed that no license should be given to any man whose character was not known to the Protector, or regarding whom the Magistrate of his district did not report favourably after due inquiry. At the same time Magistrates were warned to lose no time in replying to the Protector's references, and to throw no obstacles in the way of free and intelligent emigration. The Royal Commission upon immigration into British Guiana had demonstrated clearly that the rates of wages entered in the coolies' agreements here were purely fictitious, and that colonial law did not recognize any contract made in India. The Lieutenant-Governor directed that it should be explained to intending emigrants that no binding contract could be made here, and that the column for wages in their registers must be left blank. He could under the circumstances have done no less. When it was shown that Jamaica by a recent Act had guaranteed a minimum wage, it was at once arranged that this fact also should be generally made known. This action had the best possible results. British Guiana and Trinidad by special ordinance guaranteed forthwith a minimum rate of wages, and it is understood that in the former colony a general immigration ordinance will shortly be introduced embodying also the principal recommendations of the Royal Commission. The correspondence which passed in connection with this subject proved that there had been a great want of sufficient information. This Government was left ignorant of important changes in colonial law for months or years after they had taken effect. The information possessed by the English Emigration Commissioners themselves was found to be very imperfect. Abuses of a flagrant kind had prevailed till very recently in Jamaica, as shown by the Governor's report; the time-expired emigrants in the Mauritius have been treated with great tyranny, and abuses have prevailed in some other colonies. It is hoped that the result of the action which has been taken will be to place the whole subject on a more satisfactory basis, which will, the Lieutenant-Governor believes, in the end prove decidedly advantageous to the colonies themselves.

The position of the present Lieutenant-Governor.

Before proceeding to the operations of the various departments, seeing that the year 1871-72 was the first complete year of the present Lieutenant-

Governor's administration, it may be well briefly to explain the situation to which he succeeded and the general character of the course which he has followed.

The Bengal system.

The Bengal civil administration has for long widely differed from that of other parts of British India. That it has been so may be said to be in some degree the result of an accident rather than the original design of the framers of the system. When after many trials and much vexation and difficulty the Government of Lord Cornwallis, abandoning the attempt to manage the land revenues in a more direct fashion, made them over to zemindars, who were bound to pay their quotas into the Collector's treasury under penalty of sale of the estates confided to them, it became unnecessary to maintain the tehsildars, or native collectors and establishments subordinate to them, who in all other parts of India collect the revenue in sub-divisions of the districts presided over by European Collectors. These native collectors have since become much more than mere tax-collectors, being in fact in their degree administrators for very many purposes, just as the District Collector is an administrator in his superior degree. In some respects indeed the tehsil establishments are the very backbone of our administration in most provinces. But they are to this day entirely absent in Bengal, and the circumstance has much detracted from our knowledge and means, and causes the want of an important link in the connection between the Government and the people. Many things done by tehsildars in other parts of India are not done at all, and many things which we should know through them we do not know. For many things which must be done there is a constant deputation of temporary Deputy Collectors, surveyors, and other occasional establishments, under a system which is very inconvenient and unsatisfactory in many respects.

Absence of native local agency.

The police system.

At first the superior police administration also was entrusted to the Bengal zemindars, but it was soon found that they were unequal to this duty, and they were relieved of it. The obligations in regard to village police, keeping the peace, and the duties of watching and apprehending criminals, giving information, &c., attached to the holding of land, were continued; but a superior Government police were established, and the country was portioned out

into police circles or thannahs. This police long remained the only permanent mark and instrument of our rule in the interior of the Bengal districts, till at a later period subordinate judicial establishments were also pretty generally established. For executive purposes, however, the police are to this day the only permanent instruments available.

The position of the zemindars under the system of 1793.

Although at the time of the permanent settlement the collection of the land revenue was made over to the zemindars and certain proprietary rights were assured to them, still, as the Lieutenant-Governor has several times had occasion to point out, nothing was further from the intentions and acts of the Governments of Lord Cornwallis and his immediate successors than to bestow on the zemindars an absolute property in the English sense, or "to abstain from interference between landlord and tenant" according to the phraseology of more modern days. This much any one who will take the trouble to read the Regulations of 1793 and the following years may see for himself. Those early Regulations were most careful in their provisions for restraining the zemindars and protecting the ryots. The zemindars were prohibited from ousting the ryots or from taking rents in excess of the rates established by custom for each local division or pergunnah. They were bound to maintain the village accountant or putwaree, and to file full accounts of their demands and collections with the canoongoes or superior accountants and record-keepers of sub-divisions under the Collector, who was thus to have complete information of all revenue affairs and easy means of reference in regard to all questions of rent rates, &c. A general power of interference on behalf of the ryots was reserved by express enactment, and a registry of all rights and obligations was to have been compiled. This last great work, however, was never carried out. Various attempts were made to organize a canoongo establishment in different parts of the country, but there was difficulty about funds, and the arrangements were never completed, till, a generation later, a time came when different ideas prevailed, when canoongoes were abolished, putwarees discouraged, when zemindars were considered to be landlords in the English sense, and interference between landlord and tenant was said to be contrary to the laws of political

Rights of ryots.

Change of 1793 system.

economy. Meantime it had also become in most instances quite impossible to use the zemindars as administrative instruments. Most of the original zemindars failed to pay, and their estates were sold and split up. By the operation of the Hindoo and Mahomedan laws of inheritance, and a vast system of sub-infeudation, the rights in the land have come to be held by many sharers and in many gradations of over and under holders; and as mere property those divided rights are held in very many cases by speculators, women, children, and others from whom no administrative help could be expected. It may be said too that while there has been a general tendency much to insist upon, and indeed exaggerate, the rights and privileges conferred on landholders by the permanent settlement, there has been at the same time an equal disposition to forget, evade, and ignore the terms, conditions, and obligations attached to those rights and privileges by the very Regulations which conferred or confirmed them. The idea of property has become stronger and stronger, and the idea of obligation attached to the functions of landholder has become weaker and weaker. It may be said that every point about which there could be any doubt has been allowed to settle itself in favour of the landholder and against the public.

Thus, then, it has happened that in the provinces which we have held the longest of any in India, we have less knowledge of and familiarity with the people than in any other province; that British authority is less brought home to the people; that the rich and strong are less restrained, and the poor and weak less protected than elsewhere; and that we have infinitely less knowledge of statistical, agricultural, and all other facts.

Civil history of Bengal.

While the Governor-General in Council was the Governor-General of Bengal, and the Central Government resident in Calcutta directly administered the Bengal territories, those territories had the attention of a strong Government in theory at least; they were recognized as a most important charge both of the Governor-General himself and of the Members of his Council, and to the very last year of that form of Government we find in the Regulations that the old principles of the permanent settlement were adhered to. The statute books of the years 1817, 1818, 1819, are full of Regulations for putwarees and canoongoes, and down to 1833 we find the obligation of zemindars to file their papers and accounts still insisted on in a fresh Regulation.

But when in 1834 the Governor-General and his Council became Governor-General of India in Council, and the Governor-General became Governor of Bengal without a Council, a great change in Bengal administration took place. Lord William Bentinck probably never lost his interest in Bengal, but in Lord Auckland's time more distant politics wholly engaged the attention of the Government of India. In the days of his successor new kingdoms came rapidly under British sway and engaged more immediate attention. The Governors-General were constantly absent in the Upper Provinces for years together, and the Government of Bengal was generally entrusted to the Senior Member of Council, sometimes an experienced civil administrator, sometimes a military officer entirely without any such experience; but always in an uncertain and casual and temporary sort of way. The Governor-General sometimes took charge, and a strong man made a strong will felt; but it was totally impossible that he could master or attend to the details of an administration very widely different from those with which he was brought more immediately in contact. Under this system the real administration in details was very much left to two important bodies—the Sudder Court superintended judicial affairs, and the Board of Revenue obtained a much larger authority in revenue matters than in other parts of India.

Influence of the Board of Revenue.

It seems to have been in the Board of Revenue that the views regarding extreme rights of property and non-interference, to which allusion has been made, had their origin. Little as these views are consonant with the principles of the permanent settlement most plainly set forth in the Regulations, the permanent settlement has been in loose and general terms appealed to in their support. It has been the fashion with a certain class of Bengal politicians to denounce every reform,—it may be said every attempt to obtain information—as contrary to the permanent settlement. It may almost be said that at one time, to ask a ryot his name, anywhere but in a court of justice, would have been considered by some people contrary to the principles of the permanent settlement.

Creation of the Lieutenant-Governorship.

In 1854 a separate Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal was appointed to administer that Government; and the office has been filled by most able and distinguished men, by comparison with whom subsequent rulers must feel their task a difficult one. Still the work to be done was then enormous,